

# Urban and Community Forestry Program

# FACT SHEET

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## **RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE!** **Selecting Trees for Your Urban and Community Forest**

### **Trees and Community Character**

Trees say so much about the character of a community. The choices we make in selecting trees for public landscapes and streetscapes will determine the nuances of that character. Appropriate tree choices can also minimize future maintenance needs and increase the likelihood that trees will reach their mature potential. “Tougher” trees should be matched to less hospitable sites, and large-scale, native and less abundant species should be used to diversify your community’s urban forest.

### **Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place!**

This is the most important concept to understand whenever you are considering planting trees. Basically, every tree has certain needs and characteristics (mature size, growth habit, light requirements, soil needs, etc.), and every planting site has characteristics (growing space, obstructions, soils, light patterns, topography, etc.) Before planting any tree, you should do your best to make sure the tree is compatible with the site. You should also visit your local nursery personally, and hand pick the best trees for your community.

### **Get to Know the Nuances of Your Community Forest**

A street tree survey or inventory can help you identify what currently exists in your community forest, what species may already be over-planted and what is lacking. Get to know how street trees grow in your community by observing them in a landscape over different seasons. Make note of attractive mature specimens thriving in town or in a neighboring community, in parks, cemeteries, on golf courses or in an arboretum. Communities should consider developing their own list of recommended streetscape trees based on the needs and character of the community, the existing environmental conditions and the capacity for maintenance. There are a host of resources to aid selecting appropriate tree species. Consult some of the publications below. Finally, browse local nursery catalogs to determine availability and visit them early to find the very best tree for your community.

To start you on the way in selecting trees for your community, here is a partial list of streetscape species that are recommended for appropriate sites in Massachusetts’ communities.

### **Additional Resources:**

- ❖ Dirr, Michael. Manual of Woody Landscape Plants. Stipes Publishing, 1990.
- ❖ Selecting Trees for Urban Landscape Ecosystems. State of New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands. 1994.
- ❖ Street Tree Fact Sheets. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. 1993.
- ❖ Massachusetts Community Forest Council Web Page. <http://www.mcfc.org/trees.htm>

**Trees generally to be avoided in developed areas:**

Bradford pear (m)	Pyrus calleryana	Sycamore (m)	Platanus occidentalis
'Bradford'		Willows (m)	Salix sp.
Norway maple (i)	Acer platanoides	Purple-leafed plum (l)	Prunus cerasifera
Silver maple (m)	Acer saccharinum		

**SOME SUGGESTED STREETSCAPE TREES FOR MASSACHUSETTS' COMMUNITIES****Large Trees: (Consider these only in areas with adequate rooting space and without any overhead wires or other obstructions)**

Red maple	Acer rubrum (*,n,w)	London planetree	Plantanus x acerifolia (w)
Sugar maple	Acer saccharum (s,n)	Sawtooth oak	Quercus acutissima
Red horsechestnut	Aesculus x carnea (s)	Scarlet oak	Quercus coccinea (n)
River birch	Betula nigra (s,n)	Pin oak	Quercus palustris (n)
Hackberry	Celtis occidentalis (*,n)	Red oak	Quercus rubra (n)
Katsura japonicum	Cercidiphyllum	English oak	Quercus robur
Turkish filbert	Corylus columna	Black locust	Robinia pseudoacacia
Green ash (n)	Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Japanese pagoda tree	Sophora japonica (*)
White ash	Fraxinus americana (n)	Korean mountain ash	Sorbus alnifolia
Ginkgo (male only)	Ginkgo biloba (*)	Bald Cypress	Taxodium distichum
Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos (*)	Silver linden	Tilia tomentosa
Kentucky coffeetree	Gymnocladus dioica	Little-leafed linden	Tilia cordata (*)
Sweetgum	Liquidambar styraciflua	American elm	Ulmus Americana
Tulip tree (o)	Liriodendron tulipifera	Cultivars include 'Homestead', 'Princeton', 'Valley Forge', 'Danada'	
Cucumbertree acuminata	Magnolia	Chinese / lacebark elm	Ulmus parvifolia
Black gum	Nissa sylvatica (n)	Zelkova	Zelkova serrata
Sycamore maple (i)	Acer psuedoplatanus		

**Medium Trees: (Plant caution under power lines or other obstructions WITH CAUTION)**

Amur maackia	Maackia amurensis	Amur corktree	Phellodendron amurensis
American hornbeam	Carpinus caroliniana (n)	Accolade cherry	Prunus 'Accolade'
Yellowwood	Cladastris lutea	Sargent cherry	Prunus sargentii
Golden raintree	Koelreuteria paniculata	Kwanzan cherry (l)	Prunus serrulata
American hophornbeam (n)	Ostrya virginiana	'Kwanzan'	
		Hingan cherry	Prunus subhirtella

**Small Trees: (Appropriate for planting under power lines or small spaces)**

Hedge maple	Acer campestre (*)	Washington hawthorn	Crataegus
Amur maple	Acer ginnala	phaenopyrum (*)	
Serviceberry	Amalanchier sp. (n)	Crabapple	Malus sp. (*)
Eastern redbud	Cercis canadensis	Japanese tree lilac	Syringa reticulata
Fringetree	Chionanthus virginicus	Sweet bay magnolia	Magnolia virginiana
Kousa dogwood	Cornus kousa	Siberian Peashrub	Caragana arborescens
Cornelian cherry	Cornus mas		

**Park Trees: (Appropriate for areas with ample space away from pedestrian and motorized traffic)**

Paperbark maple	Acer griseum	Dawn Redwood	Metasequoia
Japanese maple	Acer palmatum	glyptostrobooides	
Horsechestnut	Aesculus	Eastern White Pine	Pinus strobes (n)
hippocastanum	Shagbark hickory	Carya	Japanese Black Pine
ovata			Pinus thunbergii
Chinese chestnut	Castenea molissima	American sycamore	Platanus occidentalis (n)
Beech	Fagus grandifolia (n)	White oak	Quercus alba
Carolina silverbell	Halesia caroliniana	Bur oak	Quercus macrocarpa (n)
Buttenut	Juglans cinerea (n)	Japanese stewartia	Stewartia
Black walnut	Juglans nigra (n)	pseudocamellia	

**You might also consider planting additional fruit and nut species in open areas or park areas.**

*(Notes: **m**-maintenance issues, **i**-invasive, **s**-requires ample space, **w**-already widely planted, **l**-short longevity, **n**-native to Massachusetts, **\***-hardy in stressed sites)*